

Ms. Victoria Rutson
Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

11-22-2007

Dear Ms. Rutson,

Please treat the Canadian Railway issue with due diligence.

I have lived in Barrington Illinois since 1971. I grew up in this town and never want to leave. My children feel the same way. But this issue could change all that for many people.

Barrington already has two railroad tracks that cross in the middle of town and a growing list of actual deaths as a result of accidents involving those trains. To greatly increase the train traffic with FRIEGHT TRAINS is going to be the last straw for reasons of traffic, pollution and most importantly safety.

Attached are just three examples of the types of tragedies we could be inviting by allowing this increase in freight traffic. The most recent train related accident was only a few days ago right here in Barrington.

- Train hits Buss in Fox River Grove (5 children dead)
- Train Fatally Strikes Teen in Barrington (1 child dead)
- Hinton train Collision (23 dead - CNR Freight train collides with commuter train)

Since we have two separate lines crossing in the middle of town, the odds of those lines having a collision similar to the Hilton Train Collision between a Canadian National freight and a commuter train will be a real possibility. Not only that but it could happen in the middle of a tightly populated area injuring not just passengers but many residents as well.

Do the people of Chicago and the NW suburbs really want more deaths, civic litigation, pollution and traffic congestion? Will this help anyone in our great area?

Sincerely,



Bret Raedel
Barrington, IL 60010

Hinton train collision

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Hinton train collision** was a railway accident that occurred on February 8, 1986. Twenty-three people were killed in a collision between a Canadian National Railway freight train and a VIA Rail passenger train. It was the most lethal Canadian rail disaster since the Dugald accident of 1947. It was surmised that the accident was a result of the crew of the freight train becoming incapacitated, and the resulting investigations revealed serious flaws in CNR's employee practices.

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Vicinity of the accident

The accident took place on a stretch of Canadian National Railway's transcontinental main line, near the town of Hinton, Alberta, west of Edmonton. Nearby towns are Jasper to the west and Edson to the east. Passenger service on the line was provided by VIA Rail Canada. Slightly over half of the 100 mile (160 kilometre) stretch of track between Jasper and Edson was double-tracked, including 11.2 miles (18 kilometres) of trackage from Hargwen siding west to Dalehurst siding. Traffic on this line was controlled with Centralized Traffic Control (CTC).

Prelude

On the morning of February 8, 1986, VIA Rail's No. 4 train, the combined *Super Continental* and *Skeena*, was travelling from Jasper east to Edmonton on its transcontinental journey. It consisted of 14 units in the following order:

1. Diesel locomotive
2. Diesel locomotive
3. Baggage car
4. Coach
5. Dome car
6. Sleeping car
7. Sleeping car
8. Diesel locomotive (inoperative)
9. Steam generator car
10. Baggage car
11. Coach

12. Lounge car
13. Sleeping car
14. Steam generator car

The unusual make up of the train was the result of two separate trains being joined together in Jasper. The first seven units had originated in Vancouver, and the next six units had originated in Prince Rupert. The last unit, the steam generator car, was added in Jasper on its way to Edmonton for maintenance. One hundred fifteen people were on the train; 94 passengers, 14 stewards and seven crew.

Canadian National Railway's westbound train No. 413 consisted of three locomotives, followed by a high-speed spreader, 35 cylindrical hoppers loaded with grain, seven bulkhead flat cars loaded with large pipes, 45 hoppers loaded with sulphur, 20 loaded tank cars, six more grain cars, and a caboose; a total of 118 units. It was 6,124 feet (1,866 metres) long and weighed 12,804 tons. In the front locomotive were engineer John Edward (Jack) Hudson, aged 48, and brakeman Mark Edwards, aged 25. In the caboose was conductor Wayne Smith, aged 33.

The freight train left Edson at 6:40 am, and took the siding at Medicine Lodge to allow two eastbound trains to pass. It departed Medicine Lodge at 8:02 am and reached Hargwen at 8:20 am, where a section of double track started. The remote dispatcher at Edmonton had set the switch so that the train was routed onto the north track. At the same time, the *Super Continental* stopped at Hinton. It left on time, five minutes later, at 8:25 am.

At 8:29 am, the dispatcher set the switch at Dalehurst, where the section of double track ended, to allow the *Super Continental* to take the south track. This switch setting would have caused the freight train to see signals indicating a stop. A two-light signal 13,600 feet (4.15 kilometres) east of Dalehurst showed yellow over red (meaning slow down and prepare to stop). As the train approached this signal, it was already going full throttle at 59 miles per hour (96 kilometres per hour), faster than the 50 mile per hour limit on this stretch of track. It did not slow down after passing the signal.

Further west, there was a three-light signal, 490 feet (150 metres) east of the switch at Dalehurst that showed three red lamps, indicating a stop. The freight still did not slow down, instead jumping the switch and entering the section of single track occupied by the *Super Continental*. Had the *Super Continental* been even a minute early, it would have been past the switch at this point, but unfortunately it was not. Seconds after the freight jumped the switch, at 8:40:52 am, the two trains collided, 1,270 feet (387 metres) west of the switch. As the freight train's momentum was greater than that of the passenger train, it ploughed through the first few cars of the passenger train.

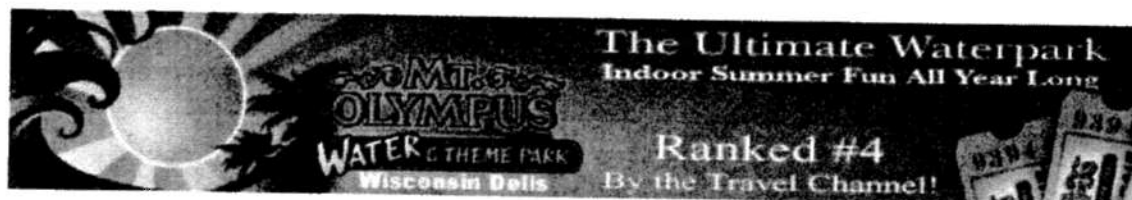
Aftermath

After the crash, diesel fuel spilled from the locomotives and ignited, and the locomotives, the baggage car, and the day coach were engulfed in flames. The two crew members in each of the locomotives were killed.

Eighteen of the 36 occupants of the day coach were killed. The death toll might have been higher except that the contents of a grain car were propelled on top of the car, helping to smother the fire somewhat. Had the sulphur cars, for instance, been at the front of the train, the death toll might have been higher.

The observation dome car behind the day coach suffered serious damage, and was also hit by a freight

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Metra Train Fatally Strikes Teen In Barrington

BARRINGTON, ILL. (STNG) — A 16-year-old boy was killed in northwest suburban Barrington after he was struck by a Metra train Wednesday evening.

Kevin Conway, of the 500 block of Chateaux Bourne Drive in Barrington, was struck by a train at Route 14, just north of Hillside Drive in Barrington, according to the Cook County medical examiner's office.

Metra Union Pacific Northwest train No. 654 traveling from Harvard to Chicago struck a pedestrian about 5:20 p.m. just south of the Barrington station at 201 S. Spring St., according to Metra spokesman Tom Miller.

Barrington police are still on the scene of the crash, as of 9:15 p.m., according a Barrington police dispatcher.

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Train Hits Bus in Fox River Grove; 5 Dead

Chicago, IL, (ENN) October 25, 1995 -- At 0715 CDT this morning, Metra commuter train #624, that was traveling express toward Chicago at about 50 MPH, plowed into the rear of a school bus carrying students to Cary Grove High School in Cary, Illinois. The accident happened at a marked train crossing at the intersection of U.S. Route 14 and Algonquin Road in downtown Fox River Grove, Illinois, which is located in McHenry County about 40 miles northwest of Chicago.

The intersection where the accident occurred is difficult to describe. The train tracks are very close to the intersection. There is apparently only room for one or two automobiles between the tracks and the intersection, where there are traffic signals. There was a car in front of the bus, on Algonquin Road, that was attempting to make a right turn on to U.S. Route 14. The car was unable to turn because of the volume of high speed traffic, trapping the bus on the tracks.

The impact caused extensive damage to the bus. According to witnesses, the train hit the bus in the rear, lifted the body of the bus off the chassis, turning it in mid-air, and throwing it about 50 feet away from the chassis. It appears that the bus did not rollover, as was earlier reported. Some of the victims reportedly were thrown from the bus, through the windows.

An eyewitness to the accident said that the bus was trapped on the tracks and had no apparent place to go. The witness said that the children knew that the train was coming and were trying to rush toward the front portion of the bus. One expert, on the scene, who has been to the scene of many similar incidents said, "It could have been far worse."

Statistics indicate, however, that the accident was very tragic in its toll. Five children were killed and at least 28 others, including the bus driver, were injured. About five of those injured were said to be in critical condition. Many of the injuries to the victims were to the neck and back and several suffered serious cuts from the flying glass. Several of the children were airlifted to area trauma centers by medical evacuation helicopters.

The accident happened right across the street from the Fox River Grove Police Station. Immediately after the crash, witnesses said that all of the officers in the station rushed to the scene within seconds after the impact. The Fox River Grove Fire Department was called and immediately requested an Emergency Medical Services 5th Alarm on Box 5-651, upon arrival at the scene.

In all, 16 ambulances were sent to the scene of the crash, as well as the three medical evacuation helicopters. One child was sent to Loyola Medical Center in Maywood and two were transported to Lutheran General Medical Center in Park Ridge. The incident was declared under control by Fox River Grove Fire Command at 08:50 CDT. According to police officials, the National Transportation Safety Board is enroute to the scene and an intensive investigation of the accident will ensue later today.

Clark Staten, Executive Director of the Chicago-based Emergency Response & Research Institute (ERRI), said that this tragic accident is another example of the appalling traffic safety record of school buses in the Chicago metropolitan area. Staten said that ERRI has been tracking accidents involving school buses for at least two years and has issued several previous warnings about the training, safety, and recruitment practices of many Chicago-area bus companies. Staten has called for state legislation to tighten hiring procedures, to ensure driver safety training, and to cause mandatory periodic drug and alcohol testing of bus drivers. According to Staten, those with poor driving records or substance abuse problems shouldn't be transporting our most valuable asset, our children.

"Although all the facts aren't in yet...and we would reserve our final determination until they are...it would appear that some basic safety practices weren't followed in the Fox River Grove accident", Staten said in an exclusive interview this morning. "School buses should stop at all train crossings, open their doors to visually check the tracks, make sure they are clear, and then proceed", Staten added. "It is also imperative that school buses and other vehicles stop short of track crossings and ensure that they can't be trapped in between crossing gates", the retired paramedic administrator said. "It would appear that the intersection was poorly designed, the driver didn't follow some basic safety rules, or a combination of both"; Staten concluded.

(Ed. note: As of 11/03/95 --two additional children subsequently died as the result of their injuries sustained in this incident, bringing the death toll to seven (7))

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